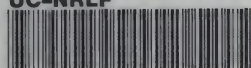


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The Arbor Dinner

FAREWELL DINNER

TO

FRANCIS ELLINGWOOD ABBOT,

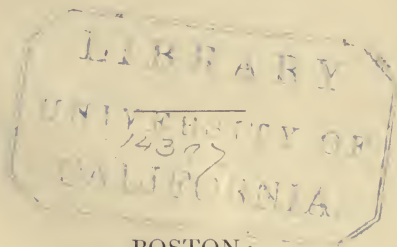
ON RETIRING FROM THE

EDITORSHIP OF "THE INDEX,"

AT

YOUNG'S HOTEL, BOSTON, JUNE 24, 1880.

FULL REPORT OF THE SPEECHES, TOGETHER WITH
NUMEROUS LETTERS FROM ABSENT FRIENDS
IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND.



BOSTON:

PRESS OF GEO. H. ELLIS, 101 MILK STREET.

1880.

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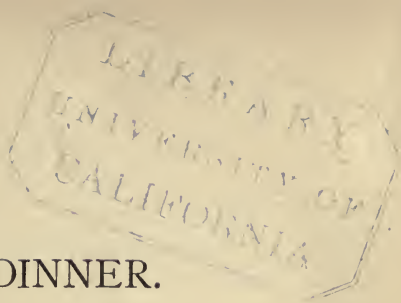
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THE DINNER.

THE origin of the flattering testimonial of regard which was tendered to Mr. Abbot by his friends on quitting his editorial post, and which took the form of a Complimentary Dinner at Young's Hotel, Boston, on June 25, is sufficiently explained by the following circular:—

BOSTON, Mass., May 17, 1880.

DEAR SIR:—

With the last day of June next, the connection of Mr. Francis E. Abbot as editor of *The Index* terminates. We who, like so many others, have been interested in the success and influence of that paper, who have observed how intimately blended with it have been Mr. Abbot's life and efforts for the ten years of its existence, and who have been warmly attached to him under the spell of his strong, manly, yet beautiful character, desire now to give him the honor and his many friends the pleasure of a social meeting and a dinner. The suggestion is a purely friendly and voluntary one on our part, and Mr. Abbot is as yet quite ignorant of the matter.

Rev. M. J. Savage has consented to preside at the dinner, and we hope to make the occasion one of rare enjoyment. We sincerely trust that you will find it convenient to attend, in anticipation of which we request you to send a note of acceptance to Mr. J. A. J. Wilcox, 8 Pemberton Square, Boston, Mass., as soon as possible.

The meeting and dinner will be at Young's Hotel, Boston, on the 25th June, at 6 P.M.

Very truly yours,

M. J. SAVAGE.
WM. J. POTTER.
E. WIGGLESWORTH, M.D.
F. V. BALCH.
H. K. OLIVER, JR., M.D.
CHAS. E. PRATT.
J. A. J. WILCOX.

In response to this invitation, about fifty gentlemen assembled at Young's at the time named, and after about an hour of agreeable social converse sat down to a banquet

prepared with all the taste and elegance for which this well-known hotel is noted. Among those present were Rev. George A. Thayer, Alexander Foster, J. F. Barrett, S. P. Lord of Lynn, Seth Hunt, J. L. Cutler, Dr. A. Alexander of Dorchester, David H. Clark, John Curtis of Grantville, James Dillaway of Somerville, S. D. Bardwell of Shelburne Falls, N. T. Allen of West Newton, F. H. Buchanan of Amesbury, Charles Ellis of Essex, H. P. Hyde, S. S. Green of Worcester, George W. Park of Cambridge, Frederick Beck, the Rev. S. H. Winkley, J. A. J. Wilcox of Chelsea, H. W. Wellington and Cornelius Wellington of Lexington, Charles Nash of Worcester, George H. Ellis, Dr. Aldrich of Fall River, John L. Whiting, D. G. Crandon of Chelsea, John C. Haynes, the Hon. S. E. Sewall, William H. Hamlen, S. B. Weston of Leicester, Mass., T. L. Savage, George R. Taber, Charles W. Storey, Joseph H. Allen, Dr. Edward Wigglesworth, U. H. Crocker, and others.

The Rev. Charles G. Ames, editor of the Boston *Christian Register*, presided. After the play of knife and fork had about ceased, he rose, called the company to order, and spoke as follows:—

ADDRESS OF THE CHAIRMAN.

There is a point beyond which eating ceases to be virtuous; yet our banquet is not at an end,—the best is to come. We are to serve up a live man. We are all cannibals to-night. Confucius says, "All can eat and drink; but only a few can distinguish the flavor." Precisely because we think we can distinguish the flavor, we are ready for the next course of this entertainment, and every mouth waters for ABBOT. [Applause.]

As to the Chairman that has been put upon you for the evening, the question has been raised whether he might not be found in the position of the old German soldier in Pennsylvania, who fought in the American Revolution, and who, after being warmed up a little more than I have been, was

brought forward on a Fourth of July to tell stories of the war. "Did you ever see Washington?" they asked. "Nein, I never seen Vashington." "Why, how was that?" "Oh, I vos on de oder side." But, without pretending to any harmony of opinion which does not exist, I cannot admit that, in all the recent controversies, I was "on the other side." I hold it forever true that all honest men agree in a sense ten thousand fold more serious than their differences, and that, in standing for simple honesty, they are forever under the same flag. And we are not here to-night to fight over old battles, nor to rake open the embers of former controversies. We are here to pay a tribute to personal worth, because we believe in it and recognize it. Others will speak of Mr. Abbot's work: let me speak of himself. I want to use him as an argument for religious faith. Some of us, who hold fast to the old-fashioned notion that there is a God in Israel and in the universe, are very glad to find any sign of His presence in the human race, any evidence that He has been here; and what better proof can there be of the higher wisdom and goodness than to find a sample of it, some share of wisdom and goodness, in human form? The hardest point to get round in the theistic argument is to explain why such a father as we take God to be should have such a family as we find ourselves to be. We manage this difficulty by taking it for granted that His children are not brought up yet, that they are still in early infancy; and so, by following out the general conclusion to which evolution points, our faith finds rest in joy and hope. And when we light now and then on an honest and a faithful man, with clear eyes in his head, we are ready to say, This is the kind of crop God means to raise; and it is well worth His while to make a world and run it for a few millions of years for the sake of such a harvest.

The test of virtue is in soldierly qualities,—in loyalty and capacity for resistance. In Francis Abbot, we honor a gallant soldier,—a man who has shown the courage of conviction and of fidelity under fire, the highest, finest form of courage, tested by subtlest exposure. We honor, also, the

poise and self-possession which help a man to keep his head amid moral contradictions and confusions, and, like the old classic heroes, "not to be frightened by the snorting of the horses." [Applause.] We have seen this man in the exciting conflict of opinions. When has he ever betrayed any concern for himself which qualified his concern for the triumph of truth? Who ever knew him to deal a foul blow or to use a poisoned weapon? The sword-cuts from an honest soldier's blows bring their own balsam; and who would not rather bear the smart and stanch the blood of fair and square fighting than wipe away the beslaving of cowardly flattery and pretended friendship?

Our gathering is something more than a reunion of those who have contended on the same side in recent controversies: it is a recognition of qualities which are praiseworthy wherever they appear, on every side of every question. The exchange of civilities between those who agree costs little and means nothing: the exchange of civilities between those who differ is one of the finest influences of the world, and is a power for uplifting society out of its debasing bigotries. When rebel and Yankee pickets exchanged tobacco across the lines, humanity spoke above the clangor of arms, and a pledge was given of the ultimate restoration of the Union.

But this occasion represents something still better than an exchange of signals between men who differ; for we honor to-night a soldier of universal principles,—a man who has a right to look around on the world without confronting a single enemy, for he has never given up to party what was meant for mankind. He has never thought it necessary to purchase peace, nor harmony, nor fellowship, at the cost of liberty or truth, because he looked beyond conflict to the time when the victories of righteousness would bring enduring peace.

I see in Mr. Abbot a passionate lover of truth and a passionate hater of lies. John Stuart Mill once said of the English, "They never feel safe, unless they are living under the shadow of some conventional fiction, some agreement to say one thing and mean another." Is not this insincerity the

disease of society and of Christendom? But, if any institution wears a mask, it has never seemed possible for Mr. Abbot to keep his hands off. He is a born moral detective. Such service has its own peculiar peril, since a man runs the risk of becoming suspicious. There are ugly faces,—some of us come by them honestly; and I think he may sometimes have gone for an ugly face, imagining it to be a mask. But such a mistake is an indirect compliment to the Eternal Beauty, which his faith affirms has a right to shine out everywhere in God's universe. I think this instinct of the moral detective by divine appointment goes far to explain many points in his history. He is quite unable to look on human affairs with indifference, and quite unwilling to look off from such affairs.

Despite his professed renunciation of Christianity, I have actually caught him conforming to that precept of Jesus, "Call no man master, neither be called master"; for he is as averse to wearing the title as he is to conceding it. And, by warrant of another Christian principle, I feel authorized to pronounce that he is entitled to the applause of mankind. *He is greatest who is servant of all*; and, as Emerson says, "He serves all who dares be true."

But it is not my wish to monopolize the evening or its topics: there will be enough to say, and enough to say it. It is not easy to predict just where the lightning will strike, and I advise every one in the room to hold himself ready to respond or to run.

This is my contribution. The enemy of frauds and shams is every man's friend; the champion of purity is the defender of every household; the student and teacher of universal principles is the servant of all mankind; and the man who puts his life behind those principles is the "King of Hearts." As such, we salute him, and crown him with our love. God bless him! [Applause.]

RESPONSE BY MR. ABBOT.

Mr. Chairman,—It is hardly fair to make a man officiate at his own funeral. I came here to be decently buried, and it was my chief ambition to conduct myself like a well-behaved corpse; and here you bring me up the first thing, and inform me that I am to be barbecued alive, which is a species of cannibalism not in order with corpses. [Laughter.] It is not easy to try to joke, gentlemen; I confess I feel very much touched at the exhibition of kind feeling which has come to me just now, when I am making a very marked change in my life, leaving an occupation to which I have given a decade, and going into something new, I hardly know what myself. You all step forward kindly, and with warm hands and warmer hearts and friendly eyes shake my hand, and bid me God-speed on my way. There is no doubt that your kindness comes to me with peculiar power just at this particular period in my life; and I can but thank you in all sincerity, with all the warmth of reciprocity, and assure you that the friendship which you here show to-night goes right straight home to my heart. At the same time, I find something in me refusing to accept this banquet as a merely personal act of kindness. We have all of us been drilled in the idea of avoiding man-worship, and steering clear of everything that looked like it; and it makes me feel so strange to be here, receiving a complimentary dinner, that I seek refuge from the very thought of it, and feel sure that what has really brought you together, my friends, is something that is very much larger than F. E. Abbot. Many of you I have never even met before to-night; some of you, perhaps, I have met but seldom; others are old, long-tried, and very dear friends. Now, it is very evident that there must be something more than any mere personal qualities of mine to bring persons here who never knew me, never touched my hand nor looked in my eyes. There is something more in it than just myself. If there were not something more, I could not deem myself quite an honest man to sit here, Mr. Chairman, and take what you have been saying

to me. I think that this demonstration is an expression of moral support in the hard warfare that I have had to fight for two or three years back to vindicate the existence and reality in this world of an honorable liberalism. [Applause.] If it is not that, if that is not the real meaning of this gathering to-night, I shall go home, for one, sadly disappointed. I do not pretend to be wholly without vanity, but I have not got enough to accept this demonstration with eyes entirely blinded. I know perfectly well it means something more than any mere personal qualities can call forth. I take it, therefore, as an expression of your support in the very difficult task which has fallen to me in these late years; and I count it, therefore, as something more than of value to me. It is of value to your cause, it is of value to this community, that you here show that I have not been utterly alone in the conflict I have had to wage. To make this plain is of vastly more importance than to pay compliments to any man's record. To show the world that there is a strong longing among liberals themselves for an honorable liberalism, just, upright, and pure,—that is a public service which may well compensate you for the labor and the trouble of preparing this sumptuous feast. I hope that all who may hear or read of this gathering will so construe it, and that they will say: "It is not true that Abbot was alone. There were many friends who sympathized with him, though they had no way of expressing it publicly or collectively; and it appears now that they did in their hearts value the principles that Abbot stood for." [Applause.] If that is the meaning of this gathering, I feel that it will accomplish a good purpose, and be of great moral benefit to our common cause.

I do not think that anybody who has been in a situation other than that of an editor, in these recent years, can exactly or fully understand the overpowering necessity of this seemingly personal contest. I think it is true that some of my own friends have suspected me of having had after all, at the bottom of it, nothing more than a personal feud. As if it were anything to me what other papers said or what

other editors did,—as if I cared the snap of my finger for the merely personal record of men who have nothing in common with me! I think that even some of my own personal friends have supposed that I was personally mortified and hurt at not being re-elected to the presidency of the National Liberal League two years ago. I have no doubt they did: that is the way men often judge each other. I doubt if it is easy for Americans to understand how one can go forward and say: “I nominate myself for this office. I offer myself as candidate, and solicit your votes, and ask to be elected.” I don’t believe that many people can understand how a man can do that, and yet not care at all, personally, for the office he seeks. Yet that was done: that was the truth of it. The cause of enlightened and pure-intentioned liberalism demanded representatives at that time, and it demands them still; and I look abroad with anxiety to find men willing to take up this work of defending a pure and upright and enlightened liberalism against the perfect avalanche of the sham. The world needs them to-day more than ever; and, I assure you, I don’t run out of this fight voluntarily. If it were not a necessity thrust upon me, I would stay in this fight till I dropped dead in my tracks rather than abandon it; but there is no help for it.

Now I want to show you one little proof of this call to defend liberalism that I have spoken of. I hold in my hand a page torn out from the latest number of *Scribner’s Monthly*, for July; and I want to read you one little sentence from it, to show you the pressing public necessity of just such work as *The Index* has been doing the past few years. This is what Dr. Holland says:—

“The great majority of the infidels of this country are heart and soul with Bennett.” [By infidels, he means liberals.] “They have openly and blatantly confessed themselves to be sympathetic with the free-love doctrines of the man whom they have undertaken to make a hero and a martyr of. *The Index* makes one mistake. Mr. Bennett has not transformed his aiders and abettors in the infidel ranks into men and women like himself. He has only furnished them an occasion for the expression of their opinions and sympathies. He is not a man of such intellectual force and magnetic influence that he has been able to draw the

great majority of infidels in the country after him, but he has been able to show, or rather the country has been able, through him and the sympathy manifested for him, to see, that the prevailing infidel sentiment of this country is impure to the last degree, and is not to be trusted with any social interest or with any political influence whatever. The safety and purity of society rests, as it always has rested, with the believers in and professors of Christianity. The purer influences among the 'Liberals,' as they delight to call themselves, have been formally and effectually voted down."

The Index did not make the mistake here attributed to it, but I must sadly confess the substantial justice of Dr. Holland's conclusions from his premises. That is the kind of record which liberalism has been to all appearance making for itself by the inaction, by the silence, of those who ought to have rushed to my side and upheld with me the public standard of a pure and sagacious liberalism. It has been a very unfair representation of liberalism that has been given to the world for the last two or three years, but I cannot blame Dr. Holland at all for his scathing criticism. He has drawn logically correct inferences from the only facts before him; for the convictions of pure liberalism have failed to assert themselves publicly. Yet if it is true that the lower type of liberalism has got enough energy and self-assertiveness to come forward and declare itself to the world emphatically, squarely, strongly, while the better type of liberalism is too feeble to make any such self-assertion, too feeble or too wanting in public spirit, I think that Dr. Holland is substantially right, and that the liberalism of this country will go down before the overwhelming condemnation of the people. Let us try to rescue liberalism from such reproaches, really undeserved, yet justified by our own apathy, as these of Dr. Holland. He is a fair man; he does not mean to misrepresent at all, or to pervert; he has argued honestly from the facts he has seen. And it behooves us now to give public expression, in every possible way, to that higher and nobler liberalism which has purity, honor, truthfulness, justice, and integrity at heart. [Applause.]

That is the reason, gentlemen, why I value this demonstration. It pleases me as a man: I tell you sincerely, it

goes right home to my heart; but it pleases me more that, as a representative of the liberalism you approve, you should be moved to give me the right hand of fellowship on quitting my post. I take it to be a certification to the world that your sympathies have been with me in the work I have been doing. I know we are here Unitarians and Non-Unitarians, and I rejoice to stand with Christians, with Catholic and Protestant Christians alike, for justice and purity; and I will always do so. These things are more precious than our little differences of theological opinion. When it comes to the salvation of that on which all society rests, the sanctity and purity of our homes, then I say all good men must join hand to hand and stand shoulder to shoulder, and make common contest for the preservation of that which makes life most worth living. [Applause.] And so I sit down as I rose, thanking you much, as I must and do, for the kindness of your expression to me, but a great deal more for the expression you have here given of your sympathy with that which is dearer to me than even myself. [Applause.]

The Chairman then read letters from Messrs. Samuel Longfellow, Charles D. B. Mills, E. W. Meddaugh, and others, printed below, and called upon Mr. Connor to speak.

ADDRESS OF REV. ROWLAND CONNOR.

It seems to me that the phraseology with which our presiding officer began this evening is somewhat unfortunate. He spoke of a barbecue, which necessitated, of course, the introduction of a corpse. Then Mr. Abbot went beyond that, and proposed to have a funeral; and, if we keep along in the same direction, we must go beyond the funeral. The only way in which I can do that is to follow the lesson which the ancients gave in telling us that every feast needed its skeleton.

Mr. AMES. — I thought you were coming to the resurrection.

Mr. CONNOR.—No: the dry bones of the skeleton precede the resurrection. The resurrection will keep for somebody else. The skeleton I would introduce at this feast is this: that I am not very hopeful with reference to the future of—what shall I say here, with Free Religionists and Unitarians and I know not what else around me?—I will say simply with reference to the future of liberalism in theology. It is easy enough to be hopeful in this presence, where the line of thinking moves in one direction,—easy enough to be somewhat buoyant in spirit, after listening to such words as we have listened to, both in the speeches and in the letters which have been read to us; but, when we go away from here, and, forgetting those whose faces we have seen and words we have listened to, forgetting the letters that have been read, look at the real facts of the world, I do not think that any one can be very hopeful. The world is not yet ready for freedom in religion; it is not yet ready for liberalism in theology; it is not yet ready, I think, to take philosophy as the guide of life, although our friend Abbot asks us all to take it for a guide,—I mean the world as a whole. I believe that the world is a rather discouraging place to live in, unless we are willing to face the discouragements fairly and squarely. In this way only can we afterward recognize and ascribe due weight to what is encouraging. The world will not rid itself of superstition for a long time to come. All over Europe we can observe the influence of superstitions from which we are glad to fancy we have freed ourselves; all over the Asiatic continent there are innumerable superstitions of which we scarcely know the name, and which certainly that portion of the world is not yet ready to discard. Pass from Europe and Asia to Africa,—that really new continent which has been recently introduced to us, with its teeming millions and fertile lands, destined to produce more and more millions of inhabitants,—and ask the question, What is to be the condition of the people of that continent? We are told that the negroes there are being converted to Mohammedanism with wonderful rapidity; and they are being converted to Roman Catholicism, to various

superstitious forms of Christianity; and these superstitions, which are destined doubtless to assist in carrying them a long step upward in progress, will require, nevertheless, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years before they can be wholly thrown off. We know that the barbarians came down from the North and overthrew the civilization of old Rome. Who will dare to prophesy concerning the overturnings that may yet come to our modern civilization, to our most advanced theological and philosophical ideas, from the superstitions which are still in the world, and are apparently all powerful in the world to-day?

This is my skeleton, Mr. Chairman; and I believe in looking at the skeleton, whether we admire the appearance of the bones or not. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in a recent number of the *North American Review*, in a very excellent article, somewhat pretentiously entitled "The Religion of all Sensible Men,"—an article somewhat cynically phrased, perhaps, but a very readable article, nevertheless,—says, in substance, that we cannot tell by what superstitions we may be yet engulfed. Take any one of the old-time philosophers of two thousand years ago or nearly that, and put him, as some of them doubtless were put, face to face with the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, on the one hand, and the superstitions—I think I may use this word to this company—of St. Paul, on the other hand, and ask him which would triumph, and he would sneer at the fancy that the theology of the fanatic would win the day; and yet it did. And hardly after two thousand years have we so rid ourselves of the superstitions of the fanatic (I am not speaking of the true things he taught, but of his dogmatism, his visions) that we can approach Marcus Aurelius with unprejudiced mind,—that we can go back to the old-time philosophy, and recognize its superiority to the theology which triumphed over it. The lesson of two thousand years ago may again come true here in our own country. We like to believe that we are very clever fellows, that philosophy is running full sweep here in America. And yet, even if it be so, some other things are running full sweep also; and some of these other things are

more powerful, practically considered, than philosophy. The average intelligence of the American people is not greater than the average intelligence of the Athenians two thousand years ago, is not so great, I believe; and yet they were swept into nothingness. I do not believe that we are to be swept into nothingness; but I do believe, and my point is simply this, that America to-day, intellectually, is not in a condition to throw off old-time superstitions, is not ready to make philosophy the guide of its life, is not yet ready for the profoundest truths of liberalism in theology.

As an illustration of my meaning, consider for a moment what the bulk of our people are going to do during the coming four or five months. Two excellent men, Garfield and Hancock, have just been nominated for the presidency by their respective parties. And now we are going to lend ourselves to a great hurrah and controversy, which will roll from one end of this country to the other. We are going to spend our strength in talking, talking, talking. We will gather in political meetings. We will hire bands and listen to their playing. We will march through the streets; and we will print buncombe speeches. And after it is all over, after an immense expenditure of time and money and strength, who will be one bit wiser than he is to-day regarding the respective merits of Garfield and Hancock? Nobody. Now, a people that can lend itself to anything so puerile as that is not a remarkably intelligent people; it is not a people, I mean, ready to make philosophy the guide of its life, not a people yet ready to rid itself altogether of religious superstition. I believe that one chief reason of the early growth of Christianity is the fact that it gathered within its embrace the prevailing sentiment of the era in which it was born: it took the good and the bad together, and therefore was adapted to the men then living. And, similarly, I believe that the religion which is most powerful here in America to-day, or which will become most powerful in the time just before us, is the religion which is most in harmony with a certain amount of superstition, which is not yet purified, and which will not be purified to-morrow or the next day.

Now, I am done with the skeleton. Let us clothe it with a little flesh and blood, and give it a more cheerful countenance. I am not hopeless. I am not discouraged, notwithstanding these facts which I desire to face. Although I believe that the problem with reference to the religion of the future is simply insoluble to-day, because we have not data enough to predict what it may be, nevertheless, there are some things which we do know,—we wise men, I mean, who set ourselves up a little bit above the rest of the world, and think we have gone along so far that we have earned a right to call back to others and tell them something of the nature of the road they are to travel. There is one thing which we all can unite in trying to do, and that is to remove morality from its close clinging to the superstitions of theology. In the minds of the greater number of the people of America to-day, morality and a certain kind of childish superstition, in matters of religion, are joined together inseparably. If the one falls, they believe that the other will fall also. It is a part of our work to do away with this great nonsense, and that for which I honor Mr. Abbot more than I honor him for anything else,—and sometimes I have not agreed with his methods, however hopeful he may have been with reference to them,—that for which I honor him more than for anything else is the fact that he has striven to divorce morality from dogmatic superstition, and to teach the people of America that the two things were not necessarily connected; that the old superstitions might die, but the purest of all pure moralities still remain. That is a work for us all to engage in, friends, whatever we may call ourselves, Free Religionists or Unitarians, or whatever else,—to endeavor to purify moral principles, to separate morality from its old associations, and, by keeping it apart from them, strive to deliver Americans from the superstitious dread, now so prevalent, lest the decay of the old faiths necessarily involves any lessening of noble aspiration or any lowering of the standard of righteous living. I am not discouraged at believing that I am only a unit in an enormous mass, for the mass is made up of units; and, if each unit does its best, the

whole mass will come out right,—at least, the unit will have done all that it can be held justly responsible for. I cannot penetrate the future, and I do not even pretend to guess in what way the religious future is coming out; but I know that, if we do what we can to keep the future morally pure, we may safely trust the dogmatism to take care of itself, assured that it will then take the least injurious form that the intelligence of the times will permit.

Dr. Edward Wigglesworth was introduced by the Chairman as one who knew Mr. Abbot in boyhood, and enjoyed the “Franking privilege”; and he was asked to tell the company what he knew about it. He said:—

ADDRESS OF DR. WIGGLESWORTH.

I feel rather like a minnow among Tritons, to get up here to say anything after the speeches you have already heard; and my only claim upon your favor is that to which the Chairman has alluded. I first made the acquaintance of Mr. Abbot at the Boston Latin School, when we were boys together. At that time, he was a member of one of the upper classes; but I remember the respect with which he was regarded, not only by the older members, but by the boys of the whole school. Whenever Mr. Gardner wished to take a little relaxation from his labors and would let some of the younger boys recite to the older ones, there was always a rush among them to get a chance to recite to Mr. Abbot,—not that he was easy in his discipline, but there was such a clearness in his explanations of the lessons that he always made them interesting and instructive. When Mr. Abbot graduated,—I say Mr. Abbot, although I am happy to enjoy the “Franking” acquaintance to which the Chairman has alluded,—he entered a class at Harvard, characterized now by very remarkable men. I need only allude to Colonel Stickney as one of them; and perhaps the typical man of the class was Mr. Abbot. I was not in that class, but had a

sort of *entrée* into it, through several of my relatives ; and I know that, among the very best men in it, he was regarded as one of the best morally, and the finest intellectually, in the whole class. I lost sight of him then for a great while, going away myself for many years, till about nine or ten years ago I returned, and heard of him in Toledo, as engaged in the work in which you all know him, he having pursued it ever since, being connected with *The Index* and fighting in every way for the progress of truth and freedom and liberal principles. At that time, he had practically forgotten my existence, or nearly so ; and I wrote, recalling myself to his mind. And since then I have had the pleasure, at longer intervals than I could have wished, of meeting with him in a more or less familiar way. I can only say that I have thoroughly enjoyed and profited by that companionship.

With regard to the sentiments which have been advanced this evening, as I am not at all a speaker (hardly ever made a speech in my life), I do not say, "unaccustomed as I am," and so forth ; but I feel a little as the man did who was stumping the State for himself, and was unable to make a good speech. A very fluent and eloquent gentleman was stumping for the opposition, and they were to make speeches together one evening. The eloquent gentleman had made a most brilliant peroration, setting forth every thing that would be done, if the candidate he represented was elected, and showing in every way the advantages that would accrue from voting his ticket ; and at the end the other gentleman rose and said, "Gentlemen, what that gentleman has said I think." I entirely agree with what was written by Mr. Mills, and cannot entirely agree with the jeremiad of our friend Mr. Connor, although he endeavored to correct it subsequently. I think that we have hope for the future. I think the country is not quite ready yet for the fate which he has served up for it : it is much as if the servant said, "The master is not ready for the dinner." Of course he is not, for it is not ready for him. I think Mr. Abbot has transferred his natural modesty with reference to himself, in some de-

gree, to the great ideas which he advances ; and I think that he perhaps has not, and naturally has not, such confidence in their immediate growth and progress as those who sit on the outside. "The outsiders see the most of the game," as the proverb goes. I think that his ideas are like the roots of the tree Ygdrasil, which go down to the roots of every thing, and which, although they have not yet reached much above the ground, will overshadow the whole earth. This is more than enthusiasm: it is a hope, and a hope which I think is well founded. I had no idea, when I got up, of saying as much as I have. It occurred to me, when our Chairman spoke about serving up a man, that it might be desirable to serve him up on toast ; and a little toast of a better man than I, and in better words than I could use, occurred to me at that time:—

"Yes: we know we must lose him; yet friendship may claim
To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame:
Though fondly at parting we call him our own,
'Tis the whisper of love when the bugle has blown.

As the rider who rests with the spur on his heel,
As the guardsman who sleeps in his corselet of steel,
As the archer who stands with his shaft on the string,
He stoops from his toil to the garlands we bring.

So fill a bright cup with the sunlight which gushed
When the dead summer's jewels were trampled and crushed:
True prophet of freedom, our hearts hold him dear.
Love bless him! Joy crown him! God speed his career!"

In introducing Mr. William J. Potter, the President of the evening said: "The king is dead. Long live the king! There is still to be an *Index*, and the late lamented shall have a successor in our next speaker, Mr. Potter." That gentleman then spoke as follows:—

ADDRESS OF REV. W. J. POTTER.

Mr. Chairman,—I think some of us who are in the habit of speaking every Sunday, and oftener, might envy the man who never makes a speech. I thought, sir, as I was hearing

Dr. Wigglesworth, that certainly his was a most effective speech ; and I wished that, at least, I might not come directly after him. I don't know, friends, how to speak to you to-night. A banquet should be a joyous occasion ; but I cannot feel very joyous at this banquet, and I thought, when we were coming into the room to-night, that we all had a kind of melancholy tread, and a silence betokening not a joyous occasion, but one necessarily somewhat saddened. And yet I do not know as we ought to feel so. Of course, there is the breaking of associations, and this I especially feel. I cannot claim to have known our friend Abbot as long as those whom the Chairman has alluded to, as having grown up with him in his youth, and having therefore "the Franking privilege" ; but I have known him and stood very close to him through all these sixteen years that have been specially the public part of his life. I first saw him during the famous Syracuse Unitarian Conference, in 1866. Before that, I had known him only through certain articles of his in the *North American Review* and the *Christian Examiner*. It occurs to me now (I believe I never made an acknowledgment to him before) that from a certain article in the *Christian Examiner* I cribbed a considerable portion, and used it in a sermon [laughter], making, however, acknowledgment to my hearers. I had not met Mr. Abbot then, but there was something in that article that brought him very close to my own heart and my own convictions, so that I found in its expression on a certain topic words that were more to my own thought than any I could choose for myself. I have never been able, however, to use the sermon since, because there was a special confession of Christianity in it, and, I believe, in that particular part that I quoted [laughter] : so it has had to go to the bottom of the barrel, and I am afraid never can be *resurrected*. At Syracuse, we met ; and yet I was rather an observer than an actor in that contest. I had not so much hope of Unitarianism or Unitarian organizations then as, perhaps, our friend Abbot or some of the younger men had. I was not born in that denomination. I do not know how I got into it. I have known better how I got out

of it than how I got into it. [Laughter.] I think at that time, after the war, there was apparently a kind of new birth in the denomination, at least a struggling effort toward a regeneration, so that more practical humanitarian works might be taken up. I remember that the call for the first Conference in New York sounded like a bugle summons for a grand humanitarian effort. I went to that Conference. I was disappointed that, after all this bugle summons, there came out only a little creedlet, that produced immediately a theological discussion and very little humanitarian work. But it was at Syracuse, the next year, where an attempt was made, which has been mightier in its results than it was in itself, to change the form of the original constitution so as to strike out the objectionable theology, that our friend Abbot made his *début*, really, into the field of theological conflict, and it was there that I was drawn to his side. After that battle, which ended in defeat, but in a Bunker Hill defeat, there was a gathering of the forces in the minority, though the minority was small; and, before we reached our homes, there seems to have been a kind of drawing together of hearts, sympathies, convictions, on the part of those who had been defeated, which finally culminated in the Free Religious Association.

From that time, I have stood by the side of this friend whom you have met to honor to-night, very closely,—our hearts touching each other,—in seasons of joy and seasons of sorrow; and it seems to me to-night as if a friend with whom I had been walking all my days as my twin companion were dropping away from me. And yet, friends, as I said at the outset, we ought not, perhaps, to bring these personal thoughts of sadness here, or to feel for our friend who is going away to another vocation any sadness at all, but rather to congratulate him that he is going out from the turmoil of conflict into a sphere of life where his talents, that are too fine to be wasted in this kind of contest and abrasion, can be brought to bear more effectively for the permanent welfare of mankind. [Applause.] And I believe, I cannot help believing, that in time that result will

come. Our friend is going into the field of teaching. Dr. Wigglesworth has just given a most excellent testimonial to his capacity as a teacher. Those Latin School boys knew very well where they were to find a good teacher, when they competed with each other in order to get into his recitation-room; and I am sure that the boys who will come under his instruction in New York (and I hope there will be a good many of them) will find him to be the same just and fair and vivifying and inspiring teacher and helper that the boys in the Latin School found him to be. And I do not think that, because he is going into that work, he is going into retirement. He calls it, I know, "retirement from public life"; but it is utterly impossible for that man to retire from public life. [Applause.] Even if he himself for a time shall not be heard of in the personal conflicts of battle over these old questions, we shall hear of his work through some of those boys whose ideas he is to train so that they will be shooting into intellectual life, and who will before long be stepping into the field of conflict in public life. And he himself, I believe, after a few years will be drawn again into other work,—he cannot help it, the public will demand it,—he will be drawn again into work which will satisfy his own best aspirations, which we as his friends will be proud of, and which will lift his name higher even than anything he has yet done, noble as that is, and as beneficial as it has been for mankind,—lift his name into a permanent place where it shall shine among the intellectual stars in the firmament of our American scholarship forever.

The Chairman read letters from Messrs. Learned, Savage, Chadwick, Collyer, Curtis, and Bellows, and then called upon Rev. Mr. Batchelor, of Salem.

ADDRESS OF THE REV. GEORGE BATCHELOR.

If I should speak, gentlemen, according to my feeling, I should take the rest of the evening; but, if I speak according to the necessities of the case, I shall only occupy three

minutes. It is nineteen years since I have known our friend. It would be impossible for me, in the time which I may properly occupy, to tell all that I know about him, and all that I have received from him. But you will see that I have a peculiar claim to be here as his friend, when I tell you that we were in the same theological class together; that, when I was ordained as a Christian minister, he gave me the right hand of fellowship; that we went together to Syracuse, a week after my ordination; that we were at the same house; that we went through that controversy together; that I sympathized with my brother then. But we divided; and he went one way, and I went the other. He became the editor of *The Index*, and I became the Secretary of the "National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches." But we have stood together ever since as friends, and more. I have sympathized with all his earnest work, although I have not agreed with all his propositions. I have doubted his premises, and therefore I could not accept his conclusions. One great mistake which he made, and which is illustrated by the speech of our friend Connor, here to-night, I will take a moment to speak of; because it seems to me it illustrates not only principles, but the history of principles. Also our friend Potter has referred to the same thing. At the first convention, called fifteen years ago in New York, by the Unitarians, it has been truly said that there was a bugle call of freedom in the name of humanity. Men were called upon to organize. The result was that those who issued the call, and who had the cause at heart, were defeated. That is true. They were defeated inside the ranks of Unitarianism; therefore, it seemed to some of our friends logical and right that they should go outside, and find outside this liberality which could not be found within the organization. They went outside, and what was the result? They issued their call, and they have been defeated. That is to say, there is no such amount of liberalism within the ranks of any Christian denomination, nor outside the ranks of any Christian denomination, as to justify the extravagant anticipations of a speedy success. There has

been no great change in the world outside in these ten years. There has been no going backward. The simple fact is, they went outside, expecting to find there a paradise of liberalism ; and they have found, scattered here and there, a few faithful ones who would stand by the banner, and a multitude who would not. I think the history is almost identical within and without.

Now some of us said, "We will stay where we are, and we will be true to this proclamation, and we will stand by this banner till we have made it possible for it to have fulfilment in the place where we stand." And the years have passed ; and to-day I profess that we have made advance toward that standard, in the fulfilment of our professions. I have no question whatever about the future. I have no doubt about the future of liberalism : its principles are founded in truth, and they are sure to prevail. When I came here, I understood that we were to sink the "shop," and to come together for a little good fellowship ; but I have found, since I came here, that the "shop" would not be sunk,—that we had come here really to celebrate it ; and so I must have my little word.

But, in regard to our friend, I have been in intimate relations with him during all this time ; and, at this moment, this is the one thing that occurs to me as being better than anything else, as an illustration of his friendship : he is almost the only man I know of who can tell me I am a blank fool, without getting me mad. Now I value a friend who can do that. [Laughter and applause.] He can tell me to my face, when he thinks my arguments are folly, that "it is discouraging to see"—and he does put in a qualifying phrase, he does say, "it is discouraging to see—what arguments an *intelligent* man can use." [Laughter.] He has a habit of that sort. If he sees folly, he calls it folly ; and, if he sees fraud, he calls it fraud ; and he doesn't exactly see why it is that those whom he characterizes don't always take it kindly. [Laughter.] He simply states these things as he would any other fact in natural history : it is a part of his science ; and it is not at all strange that other people, who

don't understand him, think there is some rancor in him. There is not a bit : it is simply cool, quiet, scientific statement of fact as he understands it. And I am not a bit sorry that he is going to get out of this business that he is in, for this reason,—not because the cause of liberalism is by any means too poor work for such a man to do : but, by this plainness of speech, and by the peculiar relations he has come into with certain people, he has made it impossible for him to use his best gifts. I had occasion to remark, when I first heard of this change that was taking place, that St. Paul — (I don't think our Brother Connor did him quite justice. He said, speaking of his superstitions, that they had won the world ; that we hadn't got far enough away from the superstitions of St. Paul to do Marcus Aurelius justice. The fact is, we haven't got far enough away from St. Paul's superstitions to do *him* justice),—but I was going to remark of him that he was very proud of having, on a certain occasion, fought with beasts at Ephesus ; but he didn't have any idea of taking it up as a regular vocation. [Laughter.] I think our friend has too good gifts to be wasted in that warfare. Let the gladiators fight with beasts ; but he is not of that sort, and he has not quite come to himself yet. There is a poet in him that he is not doing justice to now. By and by, when he gets into retirement, in the “still air of delightful studies” that has been referred to, the poet and the good fellow will come out again ; and I think that in the course of ten years he will do far better work than he could do in any controversy, in any contest, of this sort ; and I believe that we shall all at last come into a substantial unity. We have been divided in theology, we have been much united in our philosophy : I am sure we are wholly united in friendship, and I bid him God-speed. I am just as ready now, as fourteen years ago, to return the right hand of fellowship, which I think never has been taken back ; although in the peculiar sense in which it was then offered it could not now be given. [Loud applause.]

The Chairman read a long telegram from Dr. Felix Adler,

and letters from Judge Hurlbut, Rabbi Schlesinger, and Rev. Mr. Voysey, of London; after which he called upon Dr. Horsch, of Dover, N.H.

REMARKS OF DR. CARL H. HORSCH.

I was with our friend in that first fight in Dover; and ever since he and I have, as we call it in German, "Bruederschaft getrunken,"—drunk brotherhood together. Talent and scholarship, shrewdly and cunningly adapted to established conditions, to the rules and notions of society, and used for selfish ends, bring generally financial success and reputation from the masses, but not from developed minds. A scholar who advocates truth for the truth's sake, and is compelled by his honesty to criticise the so-called prominent men, and expose falsehood and wrong, has a hard task, because the masses do not understand him. The indifferent do not co-operate; and those who do or ought to comprehend and appreciate his efforts like their easy and lucrative positions too well. But we rejoice that a ten years' toil for the better conditions of humanity, which our dear friend Francis E. Abbot has carried out so well, finds more and more appreciation; and, if evolution and progress do not cease, posterity must yet accept and enjoy the principles which *The Index* has pointed out, and which we sincerely hope it will continue to do. I therefore call our meeting this evening the "Holy Supper of the Nineteenth Century"; and I think, if those good men, Socrates, Jesus, and others, were living, they would be likely to be here with us.

ADDRESS OF MR. SIDNEY H. MORSE.

Having done ample justice to two dinners this afternoon and evening, it may be supposed that I am pretty well wound up, and ready for the emergency. But one may be wound up in two ways: he may be wound up ready to go, or so wound up he can't go. Whichever may be my predica-



ment at the present time, I can certainly say as much as this: I am truly glad to come here to-night, and take part in this "Farewell, God bless you!" to our friend. But I must also say that my presence here does not mean a desire on my part to indorse Mr. Abbot's course during the last three years, nor for any particular year. I take him in the lump; and not because I have agreed with him in opinion, for I have often found that I did not, and sometimes should have liked to go and fight it out with him. But he has a way of insisting upon *reasons*; and it is not always easy to give a reason. [Laughter.] So I have adopted with him the same course which so well serves me with others from whom I differ. In this evolutionary epoch, one cannot go far wrong, if he begins by admitting what everybody says, and then goes on with his own beliefs. [Laughter.]

I esteem Mr. Abbot as a man of convictions. I honor him as an able and earnest worker. I like him because he will say squarely what he thinks; and *that*, I take it, is what we should desire of every man. We want a free and fearless expression of convictions on all subjects that may arise for our consideration. And we must remember also that no question can be held to be so settled and sacred that there may not be entertained in different minds more than one side. This is true not alone of theological or religious questions, but likewise of all social and moral questions. And what is always needed is that all people shall freely give utterance to their convictions, and also exercise the broadest charity toward one another. So only can we get at fact and truth. I have come to believe that there can scarcely be an opinion so abhorrent to my own sense of right but some honest man may hold it. Truly, there is no accounting for opinions. And now I am led to say that, if there is any one thing that may excite our fear,—and I am not given to fear,—if there is anything we need to fear, it is this: that we shall get so into the habit of saying "we" and "us" that we shall not do justice to others who hold opposing views. It is the partisan spirit that needs to be crushed everywhere. We must not only listen to those who totally disagree with us in

their intellectual convictions, but be as ready to respect and honor them as if they and we were in closest harmony. If there has been anything done helpful to theology, it is, I think, the getting rid of a Deity who would cast into a horrible place all unbelievers. We are taught that Deity is in some way enshrined in mankind. Our friend Mr. Potter has written of the "Divine Incarnation in Humanity." Now, if we have indeed got a better Deity,—better because he does not burn unbelievers,—and we are here to represent that Deity in our own conduct, why, we ourselves must not burn them. If we object to a hell for such offenders beyond, we must not make one here. On the contrary, we must so tolerate or appreciate all shades of conviction that we can enter into the thoughts and feelings of all people, and thereby be able better to judge of what they may say, and so fairly come to understand one another. The great mass of people, holding whatever opinions, mean to be honest, and are honest. We must come together as man with man, brother with brother, neither saying, "I am holier than thou," but each inviting the other, with "Come, let us reason together." So only shall we get at the truth, and fitly serve each the other.

Let me say a word in regard to what was said by friend Connor. I was a little surprised at his speech; and yet I must honor him for making it, for that is the way he feels. If he had had two dinners, perhaps he would not have felt quite that way. [Laughter.] I cannot think the country is quite so badly off. I can't believe that even our Presidential contest, to which he looks forward without pleasure, is going to be so miserable a failure in all respects. I don't much care which man wins. That will not bother me. He deprecates the wrangling and confusion, the hurrahing and inconsequential strife. But there is this which all this tumult will secure,—a wide-spread discussion of important topics; not merely on the stump, but it will be all the people talking with one another, discussing the right and wrong of things. Thus, whichever party or man shall triumph, an educational process for all the people will be one of the

results. I think there is a great principle lying somewhere between the two parties. I am myself half Republican and half Democrat. [Laughter.] I believe in centralization, one way looking at it; and I believe in extreme State rights, looking at that in a certain way. There is a question herein involved yet to be settled,—a great question, which lies deeper than any merely political movement. It is a question of the kind of *civil* life that shall prevail throughout the whole country. We ask, What shall become of the country? Shall the country be equal to its opportunity? Shall there be room for all people to *live* here and *grow* here,—for all, every man and every woman, to be himself and herself, and make the most of himself or herself, and the best? It is not, I say, a question of political fortunes, but a question involving the social life and growth of a great people.

Our friend does not hope for very much, at least in the near future. I may say that I have ceased to hope; and yet I am not without hope or its equivalent. I don't hope that this or that may happen. It really doesn't matter. I am not cast down if it does not, nor am I greatly lifted up if it does. For all the time I feel and know that there is something in the heart of the world that has got to come out of it, and will come out, in due season. In short, the universe has a meaning that must and will be expressed. The worlds—we—are in the process. So it does not signify whether the "millennium" come to-day, to-morrow, or a hundred or a thousand years hence. It can't come any faster than it *can* come. If I hadn't faith that this universe, this universal life, meant this successful evolution and achievement, I would end all thought on the subject at once. But I have the abiding, ever-present conviction that all this agitation, all this work, and all these plans,—all the joys, sorrows, all the manifold life we are passing through,—mean—in *due season*—the blossoming of the flower of humanity. The race can no more escape the achievement than it can escape the life it has begun.

So, you see, while I do not have hopes, I am not without hope, in what I believe to be the largest and best sense of the word.

And therefore I recognize in this work, in this Free Religious movement, in what our friend Abbot has achieved, in what others have done, in what all have done and are doing, good and helpful contributions. There was a time when I was much disturbed because the Unitarians adopted for a creed the "Lordship of Christ." But I have lived to see even their little creed become a dead letter.

Mr. AMES.—No!

Mr. MORSE.—No? The very presence of our friend here on this occasion testifies that it is so. [Laughter.]

Well, this was an entirely impromptu speech. Thoreau used to say that it takes a long time to make a thing short. [Laughter.] Perhaps if I had been better occupied during the day, I might have made it shorter, and have told you what I feel and think better than I have done. One word more, and I will stop. Let everybody say as he thinks, and, whether what he says be right or wrong, it won't matter; for if only the *Spirit* of Truth lead, it will guide into all truth. It is not of so much consequence whether you or I speak the truth to-day, but whether we *try* to speak it. Every one *so trying*, with charity and free toleration of one another, instead of dividing more and more into cliques or sects or associations, we shall come more and more to realize that we belong to the whole race, and have one common association round the globe. [Applause.]

REMARKS OF URIEL H. CROCKER, ESQ.

I did not expect to be called upon to-night. I am not a talking man, and there are so many here who are talking men — clergymen and ex-clergymen — that I supposed there would be no danger of my being reached; and I believe the hour has arrived, too, at which we agreed to adjourn. I will say, however, that I am one of the few here that have never met Mr. Abbot till to-night (I believe I had only known him through *The Index*, and through his published addresses); but I felt, from what I had known of him, strongly moved to come, and, by my mere presence as one, help to give expres-

sion to the feeling that I had of honor for the effort shown by him in his honest and earnest and self-sacrificing maintenance of what he believed to be the truth, in endeavoring to help to dispel the superstitions that were prevalent, and in trying to hold back the body of the liberals from rushing precipitately, after having given up certain superstitions, into the adoption of every new and crude idea as the truth. It has seemed to me that he was one of the few that had battled nobly to resist that tendency. For that reason, I was glad, and am glad, to be here to help to honor him. [Applause.]

REMARKS OF REV. W. H. SPENCER.

It is too late now, Mr. Chairman, to make a speech ; but I do want to say to Mr. Abbot what I never have said to him, and what I never said to any other man in the world, but what I did say to my wife,—that I felt under more obligation to Mr. Abbot for mental stimulus during the last ten years, since he has been the editor of *The Index*, than to any other living man in New England ; and that is saying considerable. And I believe that Free Religion, too, is under more obligation to him than to any other man in New England. He has made Free Religion more rational ; he has defended it, I think, with the best reasons ; he has made it more free, in the best possible sense of that word,—never allowing freedom to run down into license or licentiousness ; and we owe him an immense debt of gratitude, I think, because he has defended Free Religion from what, in his letter just read, Mr. Voysey well describes as “the dissolute section of the liberals.” When she was assailed, when her principles were attacked, Frank Abbot, at considerable personal sacrifice, we all feel, drew his sword and defended her, and did it manfully. For that we ought to be very grateful. It may be that the result of all this may not be seen in a day ; but, as another letter-writer says, it may be the stones which we have been sinking in the marsh, and which by and by will make a highway over which the relig-

ion of the future will travel safely. I do not feel so gloomy as Mr. Connor does, by any means. I feel very hopeful for Free Religion. I do not know that it will prosper as Free Religion, under that name. But I say that it is infiltrating itself everywhere; it is honeycombing all the Christian sects; they are adopting our ideas. Unitarianism finds it very difficult in many places in the West to establish her churches, because she finds already established there some orthodox church with a liberal minister, a minister who does not believe in eternal punishment, or in the deity of Jesus in any proper sense, any more than the Unitarian minister does; and he is preaching it to his people, and is out-flanking Unitarianism in that way. Sometimes Unitarianism is reproached because she is making so little progress, establishing so few churches; but she is growing under another name. And our ideas are growing under another name; they are saturating Unitarianism. And I cannot agree with Brother Batchelor that Unitarianism, although it is liberal, does stand essentially where we do. It is not so broad, I think, as Free Religion. We invite to our fellowship not only all those who, as the Unitarians say, are "followers of Jesus Christ, or wish to be," but those who believe in truth as it is in Jesus, and truth as it is outside of Jesus,—those who are followers of truth wherever it may lead. I wish to say that to Mr. Batchelor, because, like my friend on my left here [Mr. Potter], I have felt that I was excluded from even the rather hospitable body of Unitarians. I am very happy to be here to express the love and admiration which I have for our friend. This, I trust, will not be our last supper, by any means. I hope he will have many more; and, although Mr. Abbot goes away from us, I think that that same spirit of truth—what our Christian friends call the Holy Ghost—which has filled him during the last ten years will pursue him still, and so possess him that he will be obliged to take up the work which he now drops for a moment. [Applause.]

Mr. Connor desired to add a word of explanation, and said:—

I am not in the least bit “gloomy.” I only stood on one side of the question, the other side of which has been so well talked about by those who have followed me. And I am very glad of that. I never recognized so much before the advantage of speaking early, and having a somewhat crude presentation whipped into shape.

THE CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING WORDS.

The hour for breaking up the assembly having arrived, Mr. Ames said:—

Gentlemen,—I think we part to-night with something of inward assurance that we belong to each other in a way we knew before, but never so well comprehended. It is not Garfield nor Hancock,—it is a fair election; and it is not your ism nor mine, but it is fair and honest methods in inquiry and in action. Isn't that our platform and purpose? And isn't that the central impression of all we have said and tried to say, and mean to do and be? So help us Heaven, we will carry it out from this place, and help to make it a part of the public property of the world. [Applause.] And you, my friend,—you have not only pointed out the way, but have walked in it; and our differences do not touch that central and radical agreement which is the most conservative thing in the universe. God bless us every one! Good-night!

THE LETTERS.

From Rev. JOHN C. LEARNED.

ST. LOUIS, MO., June 18, 1880.

REV. M. J. SAVAGE:

My dear Sir,—I am glad my friend Abbot is to have a dinner. Since 1865, he has been plentifully served with “gridiron.” Now let him have a dinner! I only wish there was some way to make it perpetual. There is no man of my acquaintance who better deserves it.

Mr. Abbot was a classmate of mine at the Cambridge Divinity School. It was there that I first conceived an admiration for his scholarship and for his high sense of honor. No man among us read Greek so well; and he was master of the rules of logic. His arguments, on any question that interested him, were always worth hearing,—though they did not *always* convince me then, and have not *always* done so since. Our premises were sometimes different. For example, I remember that once we argued the question of temperance. I was brought up on the total-abstinence principle, and defended it. He did not believe in that doctrine or practice,—denied that it could properly be called temperance, and, to clinch the argument, cited the example of “our Lord and Saviour,” who drank wine with his disciples! It was in vain that I quoted, in desperation, from an elaborate sermon of the Plummer Professor, recently preached to the Harvard students, showing that Jesus and the twelve used only the unfermented juice of the grape. (We both of us know that that argument was as weak as water!)

Though I am nearly as good a total-abstinent to-day as I was then, yet I will now admit that, on “Christian grounds,” he had the advantage of me in the discussion. In other words, at that time, I feel sure, he was a better “Christian” than I was; and he knows how it was himself.

To speak more seriously, however, the man whom this festival was meant to honor by his presence honors all who gain admission to the feast. I wish it were possible for me to be there, for old friendship’s sake, for present congratulations, and for the “great expectations” we all cherish of his services to truth and humanity in new fields of thought

and labor. It is a rare thing, in any century, that men meet to compliment such worth and work as is identified with the name of Francis E. Abbot. Heroism is of many kinds. Every age can furnish heroes of some sort. But the moral hero,—the man who can speak truth when others dissemble, who dares to trust the naked truth in the face of armed and overwhelming majorities, who stands for conscience and character in an age of immoralities,—rarest of all,—surely such a man deserves the right hand of our approval and fellowship.

“Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,
The compact nucleus round which systems grow;
Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,
And whirls impregnate with the central glow.”

Accept my thanks for the invitation to be with you, and my regrets that I cannot take my place at the table, and believe me,

Very sincerely yours, JNO. C. LEARNED.

From the Rev. EDWARD C. TOWNE.

UNDERBANK PARSONAGE, STANNINGTON,
Near Sheffield, England.

REV. M. J. SAVAGE:

Dear Sir,—If I could possibly arrange it on so short notice, I should cross the Atlantic to join Mr. Abbot's friends in the greeting of affection and sympathy and honor which they will give him on the twenty-fifth.

The motion for keeping Unitarianism liberal and our Christianity free, which Mr. Abbot made at Syracuse, and made in vain, it fell to me to second. If that motion were to be made now, Unitarianism itself, not only by its younger leaders, but by its elder, would eagerly second it, and with an acclaim of pride and respect toward Mr. Abbot which few men ever win. The denial of the petition made at Syracuse by Mr. Abbot led to the founding of the club first called the Free Religious Club, and afterwards the Radical Club, and to the organization of the Free Religious Association. Every incident of that history is as fresh before me as if but yesterday; and I am confident that, from first to last, the grace and truth of Mr. Abbot's participation in it were singularly clear and pure and genuine. I believe there is no doubt that Mr. Abbot deliberately sacrificed a valuable and distinguished appointment at Harvard University to keep truth with his conscience by his Syracuse protest; and I know that a like appointment at Cornell University would have fallen to him, had not those who confessed his unexampled claims felt bound to conciliate prejudice by preferring a man who had the high candor to say, “Against Mr. Abbot I have no claim.” Those

who were responsible, at New York and at Syracuse, for an orthodox bolt on the door of Unitarian communion, did wrong and injury in more than one case, as real and cruel as any ever done by persecuting vigor. There were wounds inflicted then which have not yet ceased to bleed. The best that courage and self-devotion and patient endurance could accomplish, to make a career outside the lines of inherited opportunity, has been done by Mr. Abbot during the decade of toils and trials which has now reached a close. Between a liberalism that was faithless and a libertinism that was shameless, Mr. Abbot had to stand doubly unsupported; but he has stood increasingly triumphant to the end, and he leaves his post without a stain.

My own experience shows me how extreme is the difficulty of making a great breach with tradition, and a great battle over untried ground for a new field and new lines of religious and humane activity. My conclusion has been that Unitarianism went outside of genuine Christianity when it decreed to keep a survival of worship of the "Lord Jesus"; and I hold that the identical mind that was in Christ has remained unabated, undimmed, and illustrious in the character, the conscience, the career of toil and sacrifice and renunciation, for which your festival of affection and sympathy will make a sacramental celebration. I ardently hope that Mr. Abbot has another career yet before him, of noble study in many directions, and of counsels of wisdom and learning and consecration by which religion, social progress, morals, philosophy, and politics may greatly benefit. To whatever motion of honor to him may be made, I beg to give my most hearty second and most cordial applause, fervently trusting that the sweetness and light which Mr. Abbot has ever kept within himself may henceforth fall all about him to make bright and glad his every step.

I am, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

EDWARD C. TOWNE.

From Mr. CHARLES D. B. MILLS.

To Rev. M. J. SAVAGE, Rev. W. J. POTTER, and others of the Committee:

Dear Friends,—Your kind invitation to me to be present and participate in the enjoyments of the occasion that your circular describes has been received. Be assured that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to unite with you, and others who may be there, in rendering this mark, slight token as it is, of honor to the name and services of the retiring editor of *The Index*. But to attend will be out of my power. I can be present, therefore, with you only in spirit.

There is no name, certainly in our country, whom I more cordially esteem — none that I more deeply love, and with all my heart would bless — than FRANCIS E. ABBOT.

I knew of Mr. Abbot first in 1866 (I think it was), at the time of the holding of the National Conference of the Unitarian Churches, in this city. His brave and memorable protest in that Convention I have always remembered. I was not, however, at that time so fortunate as to have heard him on the floor of the Conference, or to have made his personal acquaintance. Later, I heard of and saw extracts from the sermons of the young preacher in Dover, N.H.; and later still, but not long after, I became acquainted with the projected enterprise of publishing *The Index* at Toledo, Ohio.

The protest, the sermons, the withdrawal from the denomination he had stood connected with, prompted by deep, conscientious convictions, the prospectus of *The Index*, and the utterances of that paper, — these all, and increasingly as they came, won my respect and approval; and, from that first day to the present, I have marked the course of this protestant and earnest apostle of truth and liberty with ever-deepening interest and ever-growing admiration.

He has struck stalwart blows for freedom; he has borne invaluable testimony for a principle in religious faith which must have more and more recognition and cordial honor in ages to come, as the mind of man expands, becomes more thoughtful, wise, and free. His service in this behalf has been priceless. The cause of Free and Rational Religion in our country, and through the world, owes him a debt deeper than can ever be cancelled.

In the defence he has made latterly, especially, of the principles of morality, — showing that liberty is not license, that the restraints and guidance of a just morality are not annulled or broken, they are rather confirmed and strengthened in the emancipation from a dogmatic and liminary religion, — he has done also an inestimable service. Here, too, we have occasion to hold him in high honor.

Our brother has stood for *us* and for *humanity*. He has wrought, through all these years of toil and sacrifice, for liberty, and for interests in which we all have vital stake.

I offer, if in order for your occasion, my sentiment: —

Our esteemed guest, whose clear perceptions have been equalled alone by his dauntless courage, — to whom truth was majesty supreme, with whom to see was to do, to be commanded of Heaven was to obey. His unswerving devotion we warmly honor, his work and example we cherish with deep gratitude and love, — we hold in remembrance, and commend them for quickening and inspiration. Our benedictions follow him. May his work, in whatever field in the future, be crowned with a success as complete, a recognition as wide and cordial, as his labors

during the past in behalf of Free Religion, and the enduring claims of a true morality, have been arduous, self-sacrificing, and untiring.

I remain, with sincere sympathy, and best wishes ever,

Yours fraternally,

CHAS. D. B. MILLS.

SYRACUSE, N.Y., June 23, 1880.

From Mr. E. W. MEDDAUGH.

DETROIT, June 23, 1880.

Gentlemen,—I briefly replied some days since to a note of invitation to be present and participate at a dinner in honor of my esteemed friend, Mr. Abbot; but I cannot permit the occasion to pass without adding a few words beyond the formal regret for my enforced absence.

As one of the Directors of the Index Association from its organization to its dissolution, and as his friend, I have had personal knowledge of some of the difficulties that Mr. Abbot has had to contend with in his work for the past nine years. Himself actuated by motives as high and pure as ever moved man to action, and filled with a spirit of zeal for helping his fellows to a higher and better life, he began the publication of *The Index*. He was young, and hope was buoyant in him. The future seemed full of promise,—not of personal gain or advantage to himself (for of this he took no thought), but of opportunity for the great work of reform to which he had dedicated his life.

He has met with reverses. He has not realized that full measure of success which he not only hoped for, but expected. *The Index*, which to most of its readers for the past ten years has been a synonyme for Abbot, which he created, and with which are associated in his mind the most cherished desires of his life, is about to pass from his hands; and he is compelled to abandon this chosen field of labor and usefulness for another, which is not of his choice, but is born of necessity. Such an occasion would be a trying one to any of us, and it is the more so to our friend from the profoundly earnest and deeply rooted purpose of his soul, which is thus temporarily thwarted of its object.

But, while tendering to Mr. Abbot the sympathy of our hearts in his disappointment, we should but poorly perform the friendly office, if we failed to reverse the shield, that he may see the other side. In these years of editorial labor, he has accomplished a noble work. Both by precept and example, he has helped many poor souls to a clearer perception of the duties of life, and to the strength for performing them. He has taught them that there is a foundation for pure ethics outside of the *lex scripta*, and by his example has demonstrated the practicability of living, not only by it, but up to it. The influence of his teaching and example will continue to bear abundant and rich fruit, through the lives

and labors of his disciples, that will testify to the grand success of his life and work, though he should "end all here."

But, invaluable as has been his work of the past, it is, if life, health, and opportunity permit, but a preface to the great volume that is to come. The world cannot spare Francis Ellingwood Abbot from the field of philosophical thought; and there is a grave duty resting upon us, who know and appreciate his value here, to see to it that no circumstance within our control is suffered to drive him from it. Let us, then, avail ourselves of this social occasion, not alone to wish him a hearty God-speed in the business upon which he is entering, but to comfort and cheer him with the pledge of our substantial aid, should it be required, to the end that he may continue his philosophical studies, and labor for the furtherance of truth and the well-being of mankind.

E. W. MEDDAUGH.

To Rev. M. J. SAVAGE and others, Committee, etc., Boston.

From the Rev. CHARLES VOYSEY.

CAMDEN HOUSE, DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.,

June 7, 1880.

To the Rev. M. J. SAVAGE:

Dear Sir, — I regret exceedingly that the wide Atlantic prevents my being present at the complimentary dinner to be given to my dear and esteemed friend, Francis Ellingwood Abbot. I have a grateful recollection of the years during which I served under him as a modest contributor to *The Index*. For kindness and courtesy to his staff, he could not be surpassed. But, apart from all personal considerations, I have admired Mr. Abbot as in every inch of him an honest, courageous, and pure-minded man. His attitude, of late years especially, toward the dissolute section of free-thinkers and so-called liberals, commands our warmest applause. "Abbot and *The Index*" will be remembered generations hence as the savior of the cause of true liberty of thought, by claiming and demanding that before all things it should be *decent*. I only wish that our common gratitude could find some solid expression in giving to our friend Abbot, for the rest of his life, absolute immunity from worldly cares. If any such testimonial is started, I beg you kindly to give me the earliest opportunity of subscribing towards it.

I am, dear sir, very faithfully yours,

CHARLES VOYSEY.

From Gen. ROBERT J. TURNBULL.

WESTCHESTER, June 5, 1880.

The Rev. M. J. SAVAGE and Members of the Committee :

Gentlemen,—As your note of invitation was only received a few days ago on my return from the South, my reply has been necessarily delayed. I should be rejoiced to be one of the company on the occasion of the dinner to our admired friend, Mr. Abbot, but regret that family duties at that time render it impossible for me to be absent from home.

I cannot, however, at this time forbear recording my testimony to the expanding and enlightening influence that Mr. Abbot's editorship of *The Index*, with its purity of moral sentiment and elevating tone, free from all taint of superstition, has had upon my mind during the decade that I have been its constant reader. The paper was first brought to my notice by my valued friend, Mr. A. Warren Kelsey, also a frequent contributor to its columns, during the dark days at the South that followed the close of the war, when failure and ruin in that section seemed to follow every enterprise, however well conceived or faithfully executed. In the isolation of a bachelor's life upon a remote plantation, its advent was then like a ray of light from a brighter world; and its strong reliance upon natural resources and upon our own natural endowments, for the solution of all difficulties, was a tower of strength to the mind in dealing with the trials and disappointments of the situation, and I think in my own case has contributed much to a result which I think I may consider a partial success, where there has been little else than failure.

That this life is worth living for its own sake, and that as a duty, as well as a pleasure, we should live in action, has appeared so clearly from its pages and his pen that the scene of labor has seemed invested with a new interest, and as leading to issues in a fruitful future, notwithstanding the encouragements which seemed to be wanting to the eye of faith.

In whatever channel the labors of Mr. Abbot may hereafter be directed, there is none, I am sure, where their spirit will be more missed, and where greater regret will follow their cessation, than as editor of *The Index*.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT J. TURNBULL.

From Prof. EZRA ABBOT, D.D., LL.D.

REV. M. J. SAVAGE :

Dear Sir,—Please accept my thanks for your invitation to attend the dinner in honor of Francis E. Abbot. I have been hoping to be present, but find, to my great regret, that it will be out of my power. Though our opinions are different on some important subjects, no one could join more heartily in a testimonial of respect for his noble character. His

disinterestedness, earnestness, courage, honesty, and purity, conjoined with remarkable intellectual ability, have long commanded my highest admiration. He is one whom no motive could tempt for a moment to swerve from fidelity to his convictions of Truth and Right. It is of such stuff that heroes and martyrs are made.

Very truly yours,

EZRA ABBOT.

From ex-Judge E. P. HURLBUT.

ALBANY, June 14, 1880.

Messrs. M. J. SAVAGE, W. J. POTTER, and others :

Gentlemen, — My time of life, and the distance (reckoned by miles) between us, prevent my attendance at the dinner to Mr. Francis E. Abbot. Yet the distance is only of miles, for I am near you in spirit, and shall be proud to be recorded as of the number who rendered due honor to the manly worth, the enlightened intellect and moral tone of the editor of *The Index*.

It is rare, in this world of ours, to find a man who combines the intellect to form, and the moral courage to avow and defend, in the face of all prejudice, opinions at variance with those of the large majority of his fellow-men, placing himself remote from the sympathies of his contemporaries, —

“Above life’s weakness, and its comforts too,”—

simply for truth’s sake. Yet Mr. Abbot is such a man, — one “quit of the priests and books,” who has attained from the first to the fourth good rule of Gautama, “Right doctrine, right purpose, right discourse, and right behavior.”

On two great points which he has made prominent in *The Index* and advocated with singular ability, — the correction of religious opinions by the light of science and the complete secularization of the State, — he will live, I hope, to find himself with the majority.

On another point, — the advocacy of a pure morality, based on the natural laws, amid the wreck of ancient myths and superstitions, — Mr. Abbot has labored long and well, being all the while “the best-abused man” among us. Yet he and his paper have survived, — himself to flourish in some other field of usefulness to his fellow-men, and the paper to be still welcomed by the leading minds of America and Europe, which have hitherto appreciated it so highly.

I would write much more, but, on occasions like yours, brevity is a virtue; and I content myself with adding my kindest wishes for Mr. Abbot and those who honor him.

Very sincerely yours,

E. P. HURLBUT.

From Mr. GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

WEST NEW BRIGHTON, STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.,
June 21, 1880.

My dear Sir, — I am very much obliged by the kind invitation to the dinner to Mr. Abbot, and I am very sorry that I cannot accept it. It is a tribute of honor to a scholar who has resolutely maintained the three fundamental American rights, — the three in one, and the only trinity which probably he would be willing to acknowledge: free thought, free speech, and a free press. All friends of moral and intellectual liberty, who know how subtle, but how strong, are the influences arrayed against it, will gladly unite both in testifying their regard and sympathy for one who has served the cause so faithfully as Mr. Abbot, and in wishing him prosperity in his new career.

With great regard, very truly yours,

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

From Rev. HENRY W. BELLOWES, D.D.

NEW YORK, 232 E. 15, May 30, 1880.

Dear Mr. Savage, — I shall not be able to join your dinner to Mr. Abbot, for I have just lost a very dear brother, and shrink from festivities.

I am none the less glad that Boston is ready to testify its respect for the manly courage and conscientious verity of my honored friend, Mr. Abbot, with whose special views I have no great sympathy, but with whose pure spirit and self-sacrificing fidelity I have boundless fellow-feeling. I wish you the greatest success in giving Mr. Abbot a hearty send-off from his editorial office. We shall welcome him in New York, where we hear he is coming, with lively expectations of his success in his new calling as classical teacher; and we hope to give him all the support he desires.

Very cordially yours,

HENRY W. BELLOWES.

From Prof. WILLIAM T. HARRIS.

ST. LOUIS, MO., June 22, 1880.

Rev. M. J. SAVAGE:

Dear Sir, — It would give me great pleasure to be with you on the occasion of the dinner to Mr. Francis E. Abbot, but the necessity of visiting Missouri and Arkansas this week renders it impossible. I share with you in the desire to show some token of respect and regard

for Mr. Abbot, who has given such a rare example of honest, manly character to the world. I trust he may yet long continue to be as helpful to us as in the past.

Respectfully yours,

W. T. HARRIS.

From Rev. MONCURE D. CONWAY.

Dear Mr. Savage,—I regret that my departure for America this year will be a little too late for me to avail myself of the invitation with which your Committee have honored me. I have met many a worthy soldier of truth and justice at Young's, but none more valiant in a cause he holds true than Francis E. Abbot. When he ran up his little paper-banner at Toledo, it was something like Garrison running up his small *Liberator*. The latter has become a historic flag of liberty, and the former will not be forgotten or unsung in the day when America wears as her jewels the names of those who set free her heart and brain.

Your honored guest is less known to me personally than to most of those who will gather around him. I have known him mainly through *The Index*. I have sometimes differed from his opinions, and he perhaps oftener from mine,—if that isn't an Irishism: therefore, it will not be thought the partiality of personal friendship, when I say that Francis E. Abbot appears to me to be one of the few distinctly religious men who have never drawn a line against freedom of thought. That which was called the Theistic movement in England is declining, as I think, simply because those who pioneered it came to a point beyond which they could not move in the direction of liberty. There are some who feel, with Spinoza, that to define God is to destroy him; whose only clear conceptions in that direction are such as are defined against such definitions. I am one of these, and must say that the more constructive Theists speak of us and our negative position in an unfriendly way,—some of them sharply enough to suggest that their deity is not far evolved beyond that earlier one supposed to be so anxious about human notions concerning him. Among the songs which the late Professor Clifford composed while at Cambridge, and which the students there still sing, one has a verse running:—

“If you and God should disagree
On questions of Theologiee,
You're damned to all Eternitee,
Poor, blind worm!”

The song will no doubt be sung so long as even liberal minds are so often found defending certain views as if religion and moral life depended on them,—which were as much as to say that one cannot fall in love without holding certain physiological or metaphysical theories

of his sweetheart's nature. The little difficulty about this proposition is that it is not true. And Mr. Abbot has recognized that it is not. While meeting opinion with argument, he has not added any sting such as men use on each other when they are aiming to please God. He has spoken strongly when the interests of morality seemed to him at stake; but even in that controversy I cannot remember that Mr. Abbot has appealed to theological prejudice or claimed that *The Index* was an organ inspired by God. These appear to me rare merits. So long as human society and the human mind are left free to follow a natural evolution, I believe they will steadily gain in wisdom, truth, and virtue: no error or fiction will remain, there can be no survival of the unfittest, unless the arrest come through some phantasmal force not included among the factors of natural evolution. Our differences and discussions may all go on in a healthy human way, if only no man fancies he is dearer to God than the other man who holds another opinion. So long as that notion survives, even in the accents of discussion, our progression can never be perfect. We must cast away utterly that false weight perpetually insinuating itself into the balances of reason, turning the scale this way or that by playing upon the nerves (inherited from theocratic ages) of the hand which should hold the balances untremblingly true. I believe Francis Abbot has held them true. So steadily has he done so in instances where I could judge, that even in others where, to my distant vision, his case was not made quite clear, I have felt that he was honestly endeavoring to hold his balances true; and it is for this his equity, for his scorn of piously poisoned weapons, as well as for his courage in taking the side of an unpopular truth and his patient working for it, that I am grateful for this opportunity of adding to the tributes of those nearer to him an old freethinker's appreciation of services which it will require further years to estimate.

Ever faithfully,

MONCURE D. CONWAY.

INGLEWOOD, BEDFORD PARK, CHISWICK, Eng., June 7, 1880.

Telegram from Prof. FELIX ADLER, PH.D.

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY, NEW YORK,

June 25, 1880.

TO CHAIRMAN OF THE ABBOT DINNER:—

Warmest, heartiest, and affectionate good wishes to Francis E. Abbot, who has so long pointed *The Index* finger of liberty against all that is unfree, untrue, and unclean! I deplore his temporary retirement from the combatants, but shall be consoled in watching how the streams of his intellect, that have poured through the scattered channels of journal-

ism, will unite in one broad flow, and bear a memorable tribute to the sea of deep philosophical thought.

Examinations take place in my Kindergarten to-day. I cannot be with you in person. I am wholly with you in spirit. Among all the appreciative words which you hear to-day, Abbot, there is none that expresses sincerer kindness than is felt for you by

FELIX ADLER.

From Rev. JOHN W. CHADWICK.

BROOKLYN, May 28, 1880.

MY DEAR SAVAGE:—

I can see far enough into the future to know that it will be quite impossible for me to be in Boston, June 25. I am very sorry that it happens so, for it would give me great pleasure to attend the dinner which is to be given in honor of Mr. Abbot. I should be sure of meeting there many dear and valued friends, with whom I should like exceedingly to join in doing reverence to Mr. Abbot for his long and faithful service as editor of *The Index*. Service more faithful, more earnest, more conscientious, my imagination cannot conceive. Of how many editors of our American journals, secular or religious, could it be truly said that they have never once written an editorial or a paragraph which did not express their undermost conviction concerning the matter in hand? But I am confident that this might be said of Francis Abbot without a particle of exaggeration. The life of an editor, like that of a policeman, "is not a happy one," I fancy, under all circumstances. Its annoyances and anxieties cannot be few. But, while Mr. Abbot has doubtless had his full share of these, his consciousness of always endeavoring to find and speak the highest truth on every pressing theme must have afforded him the purest consolation.

Precious as much of Mr. Abbot's editorial work has been to me, what I have valued most have been his elaborate essays upon the nature of religion and morality and other kindred themes. For these I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude. Here, it appears to me, the genius of our friend has its most natural home; and I am hoping that one effect of his retirement from *The Index* will be to furnish him with ampler opportunity for "beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies," and reporting to us the radiance which he has seen.

Absent from you in body, from my heaven-kissing hill in Western Massachusetts my spirit will signal across to you with kindest fraternal salutation. May grace be given unto Mr. Abbot to listen patiently and sweetly to the truth concerning himself, in so far as it shall then and

there be told! Assure him that, wherever he goes, our love will follow him, and that in the great battle for truth and freedom we shall still count on him for many a valiant stroke.

Yours ever faithfully,

JOHN W. CHADWICK.

To Rev. M. J. SAVAGE.

From the Hon. FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 15, 1880.

Rev. M. J. SAVAGE:

My dear Sir,—I give you my best thanks for the invitation. Few things, were it but convenient, would be more agreeable to my wishes than to be present at the dinner proposed to be given in Boston on the twenty-fifth in honor of Mr. Francis E. Abbot, a gentleman for whom I entertain sentiments of highest respect and esteem. He has not only done much to break the fetters of religious superstition, for which he is entitled to gratitude, but he has with singular ability and earnestness enforced those lessons of personal rectitude without the observance of which there can be no solid happiness in the world. I have often risen from the perusal of his editorials in *The Index*, deeply impressed with their wholesome, bracing, and elevating tendency; and, with many others, I regret that his vigorous pen is soon to be withdrawn from its accustomed work. I am not quite sure that I cannot be with you on the 25th of June; but, if not present on that occasion, please express to Mr. Abbot my best wishes for his health, prosperity, and happiness, and for his speedy return to the field in which he has been a most sturdy and valuable laborer.

Very truly yours,

FRED'K DOUGLASS.

From Mr. JOHN L. STODDARD.

AT SEA, on board S. S. "City of Richmond,"

May 31, 1880.

J. A. J. WILCOX, Esq.:

Dear Sir,—When, on the eve of my departure from America, I read your kind invitation to the Abbot Dinner, I thought I regretted as much as was possible my inability to be present. But after having been for a week tossed unmercifully on the reeling billows of old Father Neptune, amid horrid visions of sloping floors, swinging lamps, and drunken state-rooms, enlivened only by the recollection of vile gruel and nauseating dishes served by short-waisted stewards slanting about at every possible and impossible angle,—under such circumstances, I confess,

I realize my deprivation more than ever; for the thought of a quiet dinner at Young's, at a motionless table loaded with choice viands and surrounded by friendly faces, seems to me now the height of human happiness.

Truly did Virgil sing,—“*Caelum, non animum, mutant qui trans mare currunt*,”—“They change the clime, but not the soul, who cross the sea.” For, however far I may be in body on the evening of June 25, in spirit, in sympathy, in affection, I shall be one of your pleasant company. Were I in reality to be with you on that occasion, I would gladly join in the sentiment which I know animates you all. I would gladly unite in uttering words (which yet are unneeded) to assure our beloved friend and guest of the evening of the appreciation and affection which we feel for him, of the sorrow we experience that he is to change his residence to another city, and, above all, of our keen regret that he has deemed it necessary to relinquish the editorship of *The Index*. For one, I cannot express in words my indebtedness to Mr. Abbot for his clear, thoughtful, and inspiring editorials.

There is no parallel in America to his course as the truth-and-purity-loving editor of *The Index*. All honor to him for it! For his bold leadership and self-sacrificing devotion, the liberals of America should have rewarded him by an enthusiastic and loyal following. They will one day bitterly regret their faithless desertion of him. Yet this is, after all, true only of certain cunning partisans and their deluded followers. In reality, Mr. Abbot has a countless host of loving, sympathizing friends, who, though obscure, are not disloyal. Indeed, where are *not* his friends? They have spoken in unmistakable accents from Australia, from Europe, and from every part of our country. We represent at this dinner-table only a minute fraction of those who at heart thank our beloved friend a thousand times for all that he has done, for all that he has spoken and written, yes, and particularly for all that he has suffered for us and the cause that we hold dear. No fragrant flowers, no dinners, speeches, or letters, acceptable though they may be, can ever even remotely express our debt of gratitude to Francis E. Abbot. But as we pledge him here our love and devotion,—as we wish him the best of fortune, and bid him a heartfelt farewell,—let us hope that he can at least detect a trace of what we feel in the moistened eye, the pressure of the hand, or the look of soul to soul.

With cordial regards,

J. L. STODDARD.

From Rev. DAVID A. WASSON.

WEST MEDFORD, June 24, 1880.

My dear Sir,—I regret that it will be impossible for me to attend the dinner to be given in honor of Mr. Abbot. But I beg leave to signify

my hearty appreciation of the zeal, earnestness, industry, and constancy shown by him in the propagation of ideas which it required intellectual intrepidity to arrive at, and moral courage to profess. He and I have differed, and do so still, though less, it may be, than formerly. But I have never been blind — how could any one be blind? — either to his acumen or his uncommon personal qualities; and of late I have warmly sympathized with his contention against a wild liberalism (wild, when not worse), and with his assertion of the authority of reason, represented by the great consensus of healthy minds, as opposed to the pretensions of an upstart individualism which would dissolve all the great unities, spiritual and social, into a dust of squeaking atoms. From his “scientific method” he hopes more than I; but I long to see a book in which he shall thoroughly test its capabilities as applied to the grand ideal interests of mankind; and I hope earnestly that he may have health and leisure to prepare such an addition to our serious literature.

Yours very truly, D. A. WASSON.

From Rev. ROBERT COLLYER.

NEW YORK, June 21, 1880.

Dear Sir,—Your circular, which came this morning, thirty-five days after date of issue, leaves me no time to come to Boston to attend the dinner you propose to give Mr. Abbot on the twenty-fifth. I might not have been able to come in any event, but should have tried to be there, because I love Francis Abbot like a brother, and admire as I love him. I think we are all his debtors for the noble words he has spoken to this generation, and the truth he has bought at such a cost, but never sold. It has been laid on him to penetrate into regions of thought still dim to many of us, and remote from our life, and to report to us how divine they are, even as the little garden plots in which we have to labor. He sees the truth in its clear whiteness: we split the white shaft into prisms after our kind. We cannot help this. We must all be true to our vision. But the whole world of freethinkers must feel, as I do, what worth there is in such a rare gift, and in being faithful as Mr. Abbot has been to it, and will be even unto death. May God bless all true pioneers like my friend.

Yours indeed,

ROBERT COLLYER.

From Rev. MINOT J. SAVAGE.

Mr. J. A. J. WILCOX:

Dear Sir,—I had hoped to be present at the Abbot Dinner, and in person express my appreciation of the brains and devotion which that

occasion is to honor. But, so far from that, I have not now the time even to put on paper what I think and feel.

We honor ourselves in honoring such a man. It has never been my fortune to know a more complete and unselfish consecration to principle. The mind and heart of one such man is enough to save any cause from contempt; and no movement which develops such can be a failure. Hercules cleansing the Augean stables must have presented a pitiable sight. I rejoice to see our Hercules set free from so disagreeable a labor. And now I only hope that some first-rate university will be wise enough to find or *make* a chair for one of the first philosophical minds of America.

Wishing you all a good dinner and God-speed, I am heartily yours,

M. J. SAVAGE.

BOSTON, June 13, 1880.

From Mr. OLIVER JOHNSON.

81 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, N.Y.,

June 11, 1880.

MY DEAR Mr. SAVAGE:—

I very much regret that it will not be in my power to accept your kind invitation to the dinner to be given to Mr. Francis E. Abbot in view of his approaching retirement from *The Index*. No one will have a place at your board on that occasion who cherishes a more hearty respect and admiration than I do for Mr. Abbot's character and attainments, or a higher appreciation of the personal independence which has marked his whole public career. If my opinions were in all respects the same as his, I might well suspect that my admiration for him was that of a partisan elated upon finding a strong champion of his own views; but, differing from him as I do upon some important issues, I feel sure that my admiration of him is genuine. Christianity, as I define it,—nay, let me rather say, as it is defined for me by our standard lexicographers,—imposes no yoke upon my freedom either of thought or speech, but furnishes me with a name of mighty power in the conflict with whatever tends to debase our noble humanity. Mr. Abbot is constrained to fight for liberty, purity, and righteousness under another banner; but he is fighting in the same cause and for the same ends that I am, and fighting honorably and bravely; and I honor him not the less because he thinks his position and his weapons are better than mine. I say with Paul, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." When he has succeeded in reconstructing the world according to his aspirations, I am perfectly sure that what I call Christianity will be found enthroned in the minds and hearts of men, and the name of Jesus of Nazareth be honored and loved as never before.

And so, with all my heart, I crave a blessing upon your feast, and a perpetual benediction upon the noble man in whose honor it will be spread.

Yours for the largest liberty,

OLIVER JOHNSON.

From Prof. FRANCIS E. NIPHER.

ST. LOUIS, May 29, 1880.

Rev. M. J. SAVAGE:

My dear Sir, — I greatly regret that I cannot participate in the pleasant occasion in honor of Mr. Abbot, as it will be impossible for me to reach Boston until a somewhat later date. I am in full sympathy with the objects proposed, and only wish it were possible to repay the debt which we owe to Mr. Abbot in a more substantial currency. I hope he will not feel discouraged by the present appearance of events.

When we build a road through a marsh, it is sometimes necessary to spend thousands of dollars in sinking stones and logs out of sight into the mud. Apparently there is nothing to show for the work; but the stones are there, and suddenly we have a road.

I think much of Mr. Abbot's work in *The Index* is of this kind. The issues have been bravely met. People are thinking about them, and the *final* result is not doubtful. Others besides Mr. Abbot are suffering, and for like reasons. The most essential thing is that we do not allow our individual troubles to annoy us unduly.

Thanking you most cordially for the kindness of your letter,

I remain very truly yours,

FRANCIS E. NIPHER.

From RABBI MAX SCHLESINGER.

ALBANY, June 22, 1880.

Rev. M. J. SAVAGE, Boston:

Dear Sir, — You know that there is no wisdom in fretting because of the slavery in which we are held by circumstances. But sometimes the temptation to be unwise is too strong. How I would have delighted to vie with Mr. Abbot's friends in showing honor to him who deserves it so well! If the tyrant circumstances had permitted me to be with you, I might have drawn inspiration from the genial face and sparkling eyes of your honored guest, and perhaps succeeded in giving utterance to the love and reverence I harbor for the noble man and eminent thinker.

From the first time I ever read a line of Mr. Abbot, he became one of my ideals after which I endeavor to aspire. His intellectual vigor, unwavering earnestness, and outspoken honesty exerted upon me, at

least, an irresistible attraction. It seemed to me as if I had been acquainted with him from my earliest youth; for his is a spirit kindred to that of our own Jewish prophets. With the same purity of heart and exaltedness of thought, he forestalls the future more or less clearly pointed out by the Hebrew prophets, when all men will worship the God of Truth only. With the same fervency, unmindful of consequences, he expounds the religion of humanity to which Judaism at all times aspired. It seems but natural that he, being one of the prophets of our generation, should be maligned and persecuted. But this fate, common to all great men, must endear him the more to the heart of all who are able to appreciate his greatness and the inestimable services which he renders to the development of religious thought.

Though I deeply sorrow over his retirement from *The Index*, which for years has been my most welcome friend, I am confident that Mr. Abbot will find a field for his untiring activity and zeal in behalf of enlightened religious sentiments.

Thanking you most heartily for your kindness which permitted me to express my sympathies with Mr. Abbot and Mr. Abbot's friends, I assure you that, though absent in body, I am with you in spirit.

Most truly and respectfully yours,

Dr. M. SCHLESINGER.

From Mr. B. F. UNDERWOOD.

THORNDIKE, June 24, 1880.

Mr. M. J. SAVAGE:

Dear Sir,—I have been expecting till to-day the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Abbot and his friends in Boston to-morrow evening; but circumstances I could not foresee will prevent. The loss will be mine. Could I be present, I should wish to speak a few words, giving my estimate of Mr. Abbot's ability and of the value of his services. I am glad to know that others will be there who will speak more fittingly than I should be able to.

All honor to Francis E. Abbot, the clear-headed thinker, the conscientious editor, the scholarly representative of free thought, and the earnest advocate of equal and exact justice for all! His unwavering loyalty to his own convictions of duty, and the noble moral enthusiasm which has sustained him in his work, command the admiration even of his opponents. His character, without a vulnerable spot as large even as the heel of Achilles through which any arrow of malice could find its way, is valued most by those who know him best. Thousands who have become acquainted with Mr. Abbot through *The Index* will continue to feel a deep interest in his welfare, while they will never forget the heroic work he has done.

Regretting that I cannot be present, and wishing you a very pleasant party, I am

Very truly yours,

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

From Mr. CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

BROOKLINE, May 30, 1880.

Messrs. M. J. SAVAGE, WM. J. POTTER, and others :

Dear Friends,—I rejoice to learn, by your kind note of invitation now before me, that the friends of Mr. Francis E. Abbot intend to give public expression to their high regard for him, and their appreciation of his work as editor of *The Index*, before he leaves Boston. Circumstances will prevent my presence at the dinner you propose to give on the 25th of June. But I am heartily glad to find this occasion of declaring the respect and reverence I feel for Mr. Abbot, and my sense of the practical value of his editorial work in promoting the public welfare, intellectually and morally. For ten years, we, the readers of *The Index*, have recognized in Mr. Abbot an earnest search for truth, a candid estimate of conflicting opinions in regard to it, a frank and fearless expression of the conclusions at which he had arrived, justice in dealing with opponents, signal sweetness of temper under misrepresentation and abuse, confidence that free discussion is the right and the best means of finding truth, persistent labor and self-sacrifice in behalf of principle, and a purity and nobleness of life which enhanced the value of his testimony.

I would especially mention in Mr. Abbot's praise that, when occasion arose, he emphasized the distinction between liberalism and libertinism, and did not shrink from the unpleasant duty of resisting those who would press liberty to the point of licentiousness.

Trusting that Mr. Abbot may meet the success he so well deserves in his next enterprise, and that all may go well at the pleasant festival you are arranging,

I am yours very truly,

CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

From Prof. ADOLPH WERNER.

NEW YORK, 339 West 29th Street, June 1, 1880.

Mr. M. J. SAVAGE:

Dear Sir,—Please accept my thanks for your kind invitation. It would give me great pleasure to be able to join you in an expression of admiration of Mr. Abbot, for whose character, intellect, attainments, and work I have long had the highest respect. I regret exceedingly that the work connected with the close of the college year will detain me in New York.

I am very respectfully yours,

ADOLPH WERNER.

From Rev. SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

GERMANTOWN, May 31.

Dear Sir,—My duties will keep me at home at the time of the proposed dinner to Mr. Abbot, so that I cannot accept your invitation. I should be glad, however, to say that, while I have often differed from *The Index* in thought and in methods, I have always respected its editor's ability, thorough sincerity, and good spirit; his devoted and eager knight-errantry in behalf of liberty and in the search for truth; and his earnest loyalty in keeping the banner of liberalism free from moral stain.

Sending my respects to him and the good company which will gather to greet him on the twenty-fifth,

I am, dear sir, cordially yours,

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

Rev. M. J. SAVAGE.

From Mr. GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

NEWCASTLE CHAMBERS, Essex Street, Temple,
LONDON, W.C., June 10, 1880.

My dear Sir,—A short illness overtook me in Scotland, else I should have replied to your letter at once. It would be to me a pleasure, as well as an honor, to take part in the dinner to Mr. Francis Ellingwood Abbot, were it possible. Few persons whom I had the pleasure to meet in America impressed me more than he, with his bright earnestness and singleness of purpose in the advocacy of progressive opinion. His noble impetuosity in striving for the intrinsic integrity of free thought, alike in principle and conduct, makes us all in every country his debtors, who care for the reputation of intellectual liberty. I trust that the great cause which he has so brilliantly carried forward will continue to prosper in the hands of Mr. Potter, his successor, and that Mr. Abbot will live long to witness, with pride and honor, the good seeds spring up a thousand-fold, which he has sown with so valiant a hand.

Not being able to write myself, my daughter Emilie writes for me, in the hope that these few words may reach you with the many others you will receive on the twenty-fifth.

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

The Rev. M. J. SAVAGE.

From Mr. CHARLES WATTS.

The "SECULAR REVIEW," 84 Fleet Street,
LONDON, E.C., June 8, 1880.

Dear Sir,—Many thanks for your kind invitation to be present at the dinner you intend giving to Mr. Abbot on June 25. I regret very much that I shall not be present, as it would afford me great pleasure to join in a manifestation of hearty appreciation of the labors of one who, like Mr. Abbot, has lived a noble and consistent public life. I have not the pleasure of personally knowing the gentleman; but, from his writings and the testimony of those who have the advantage of his acquaintance, it is evident that he is thoroughly worthy of the honor you are about to confer upon him. Mr. Abbot is undoubtedly a consistent worker for the public good, and one who has the courage of his opinions and a marked fidelity to conviction; a gentleman who has proved that he has a mind superior to selfish interests, and whose actions are governed by the principles of uniform rectitude and integrity. In his future career, I earnestly wish him every success, and trust that your gathering on the twenty-fifth will be in every sense successful.

With sympathy for all who work for human improvement,

Believe me, yours very truly,

CHARLES WATTS.

The Rev. M. J. SAVAGE, Boston, Mass.

From Mr. NATHANIEL R. WATERS.

Rev. M. J. SAVAGE:

Dear Sir,—Your missives reached me in Baltimore a few days ago, and I would gladly thank you for them in person and be present at the forthcoming banquet; but fate will not have it so. To honor Mr. Abbot at this time is to honor Truth and Right, and to uphold the liberal cause upon its only safe and sound basis. We have crying need of men like him, and of the work they are fitted to do. Happy for society and the world, whose monster evils the spread of knowledge and righteousness alone can effectually redress, if the needed seers and doers shall speedily come, and if they shall be recognized and honored as they ought to be wherever they appear. The liberal name covers self-seekers and demagogues to a fearful extent; and the amount of small shot expended against the heaving sides of moribund church religion is shocking to an economist. But the "words fitly spoken," that will help us to avoid putting our own lusts in the place of our neighbors' superstitions, are indeed so rare as to be "like apples of gold in network of silver." For my part, I can hardly conceive of our *Index* without an ABBOT; but I

heartily hope that the organ will flourish under the new auspices, for we require it still, and I know of no paper to take its place.

Let me in conclusion wish a useful, prosperous, and lengthened life-time to Mr. Abbot; to *The Index*, abounding success and triumph; to all your good company, appetite, digestion, and fresh, free-thinking fruits to follow.

I am, sir, respectfully yours,

NATHANIEL RAMSAY WATERS.

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 3, 1880.

From Mr. LEWIS G. JANES.

BROOKLYN, June 23, 1880.

MR. J. A. J. WILCOX:

My dear Sir,—Contrary to my expectation, business engagements will prevent me from being present at the dinner to Mr. Abbot on Friday next. I had made all my arrangements to go, and am reluctantly compelled to alter my plans.

I shall be with you, however, in spirit and sympathy. My acquaintance with Mr. Abbot through *The Index*, since its earliest issue, has steadily heightened my respect for his sincerity, truthfulness, and ability. The cause of freedom and character in religion can ill afford to lose the labor of his brain and pen; and I can but hope, while wishing him all success in his new field of labor, that the cause to which he has already devoted so many of his best years may not wholly be deprived of his voice and pen.

Acknowledging gratefully my own personal obligations to Mr. Abbot,

I am yours faithfully,

LEWIS G. JANES.

From Mr. CHARLES M. CUYLER.

ALBANY, N.Y., June 23, 1880.

J. A. J. WILCOX:

Dear Sir,—Absence from the city and other causes have interfered to prevent an earlier reply to the kind invitation of yourself and others to be present at a dinner to be tendered our friend, Mr. F. E. Abbot, upon the occasion of his leaving *The Index*, over whose columns he has so long and so ably presided. I exceedingly regret that business engagements will not permit my attendance at an entertainment which cannot fail to be an extremely delightful one. My sympathies have been with Mr. Abbot throughout his connection with *The Index*, but more particularly during the last few years, when he has been obliged

to struggle with a desperate effort to pervert to base uses and ends the cause he had so dearly loved and bravely and unselfishly labored for.

My kindest and best wishes go equally with our friend wherever duty may in the future carry him, and with the dear *Index* under its new management. I shall be pleased at any time to contribute my mite to any more substantial testimonial which Mr. Abbot's friends may see fit to tender him, and which I believe he deserves to receive.

I am yours very respectfully,

CHAS. M. CUYLER.

From Mr. E. B. WELCH.

NEW YORK, 137 Broadway, June 24, 1880.

Mr. J. A. J. WILCOX:

Dear Sir,—I have been hoping, ever since the receipt of the invitation that you kindly sent me, to be able to meet our mutual friend, Francis E. Abbot, at the dinner to be given in his honor to-morrow, in Boston, by a few of his numerous friends and admirers; but at the last moment I am reluctantly compelled to forego the anticipated pleasure. I know that the occasion will be a rare social and intellectual treat, and regret that I cannot enjoy it and express to Mr. Abbot the obligations that I feel under to him for the large measure of enjoyment and instruction derived from *The Index* while under his editorship.

Will you also do me the favor to present to Mr. Abbot a volume which I found to-day in a street book-stall, bearing the following title:—

“Antonii van Dale Dissertationes de Origine ac Progressu Idololatriæ et Superstitionum,” etc.

It bears the imprint of “Boom,” Amsterdam, MDCXCVI (1696); so that booms are not a modern invention, as New Yorkers generally suppose. Whether the book has any special value except for its age and the subjects it treats of, I am not competent to judge, having dropped my school-days Latin, together with my early Calvinistic education, along the road of life; but I think that Mr. Abbot, being a scholar as well as a philosopher, may find something in it that may give it some value to him.

Yours truly,

E. B. WELCH.

From Mr. WILLIAM GREEN.

WEST NEWTON, May 31, 1880.

Mr. J. A. J. WILCOX:

Dear Sir,—I have before me your note of the 17th instant, inviting me to unite with some of Mr. Abbot's friends in giving him a social reception before he shall relinquish the editorship of *The Index*. Mr.

Abbot deserves all the attention and honor and sympathy that will ever be given him, and I am pleased to hear of the proposed meeting of his friends. As long as I have known *The Index*, I have been much interested in it and in Mr. Abbot, and would be much gratified to become acquainted with those who sympathize with him in his reformatory labors. But my age, with its usual accompaniments, is such that I do not go out evenings, nor could I endure the fatigue that would attend it; and my hearing is such that I should hear very little of what would be said on the occasion, and consequently should be no companion. Therefore I am obliged to ask you to accept these reasons as my excuse for not joining with you and others on the proposed occasion. Please accept my thanks for the invitation.

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM GREEN.

From Mr. RALPH WALDO EMERSON, by his daughter.

Rev. Mr. SAVAGE:

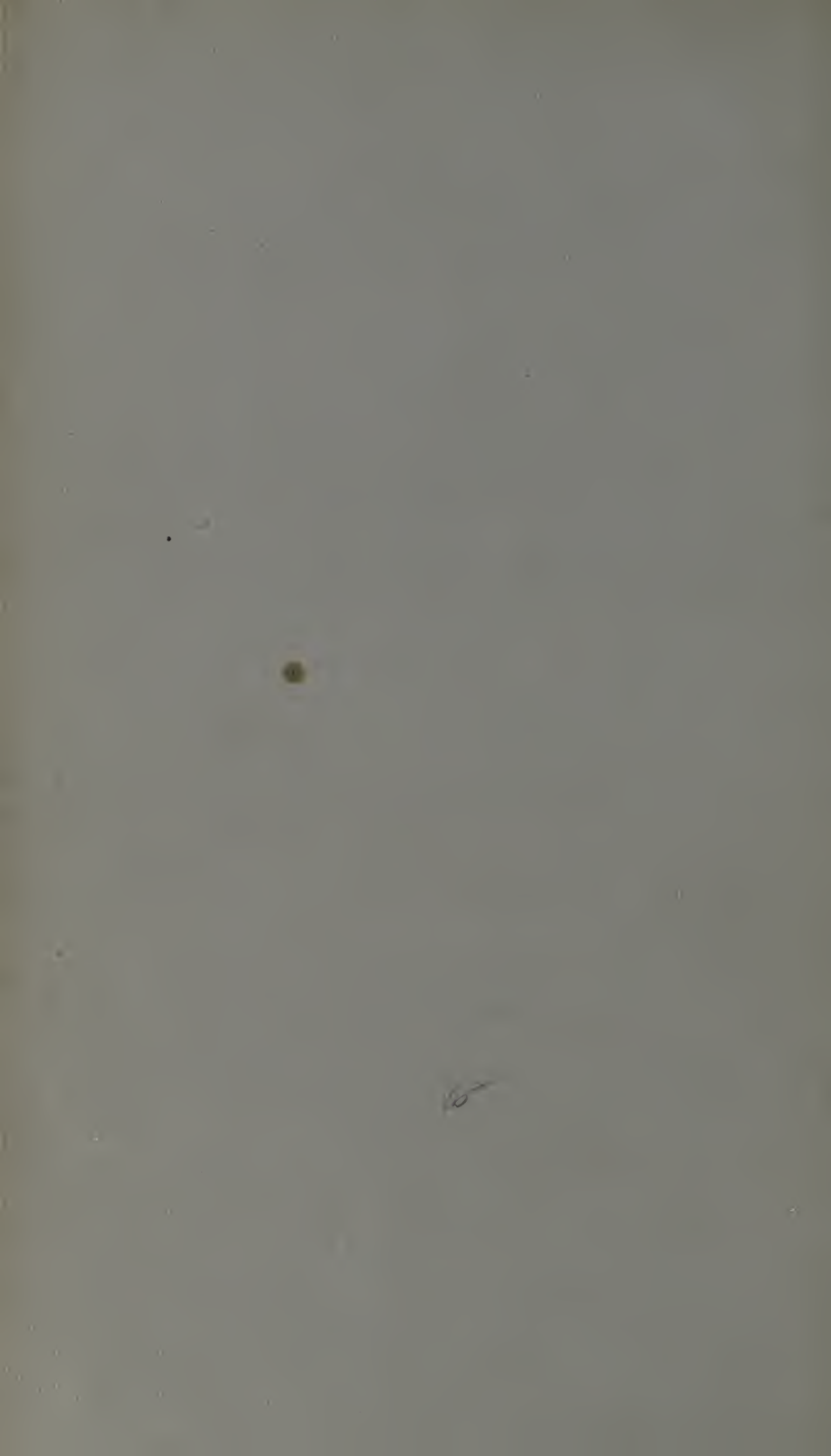
CONCORD, June 23, 1880.

Dear Sir,—My father duly received your note inviting him to the dinner for Mr. Abbot; but he does not feel able to come, nor even to write a letter for the occasion. He for some time deferred answering your letter, thinking he might be able to write later; but he finds he is not.

Yours truly,

ELLEN J. EMERSON.





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